

AWA GETS \$270,000 SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY GRANT



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Amador County – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy and delivered an early Christmas present to Amador Water Agency Thursday, in the form of a planning grant for \$270,000 that until recently was frozen by the state economy. Sierra Nevada Conservancy Assistant Executive Director Joan Keegan said “for your grant, it’s a complete thaw.” Keegan and SNC Area Representative Brandon Sanders met with Assemblywoman Alyson Huber at a special AWA board meeting Thursday. Interim General Manager Gene Mancebo said the grant will build on infrastructure issues studied in the 1970s for a county regional wastewater plan. He said AWA sought the grant to update the old plan, “affectionately known as the Purple Pipe system.” The aim in the regional planning project is to try to reuse wastewater and free up raw river water for treatment and drinking. He said Sutter Creek is now looking at building a tertiary plant, and Jackson is reviewing its discharge and future permitting. The updated regional plan led various agencies in different directions, and the next regional planning approach will aim at developing and executing a strategic plan, publishing a Master Plan, and making it available to other agencies. He said AWA staff could give presentations on the plan. \$90,000 of the grant is “focused on the development of the strategic outreach plan.” Director Don Cooper said he would like to add to the dialog a wastewater pipeline from Buckhorn to a regional plant, to help solve the Upcountry problems of failing leach-field systems. Mancebo said outlying areas such as Buckhorn, Lone, Plymouth and Jackson should be part of the discussion. Vice President Debbie Dunn said the grant was brought up at the Sutter Creek meeting on Gold Rush Wednesday, with people saying they should be a part its regional planning. Huber said she saw nothing in Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s program that would stop it from looking at a larger regional planning area, as far as construction and financing, and improving “purchasing power.” President Bill Condrashoff asked if getting an “inter-regional plan” would help AWA be more likely to receive funding. Huber said with the grant, AWA can finish its plans and be more competitive when funding comes available. She said it would help qualify for federal money, but she didn’t “know of any specific pots” of funding. Dunn asked if they could request state or federal funding for a Purple Pipe system. Huber said she voted against the Delta Legislation, but its bond measure does have funding for water reclamation systems. She preferred a revenue bond, but it is “general obligation,” she said, meaning all taxpayers in the state pay for it. Story by Jim Reece

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